



# *The Senior Sentinel*

884-4100

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798-0231

## ***Happy Father's Day \*June 15th\****

### **What is the difference between a Welcome to Medicare visit and Annual Wellness visit?**

The Welcome to Medicare visit is a one-time visit with your doctor or other health care provider that maps out your health care needs and helps create a preventive care plan to keep you healthy. Medicare covers a Welcome to Medicare visit as long as it occurs within the first 12 months of your enrollment into Medicare Part B. If 12 months have passed since your enrollment into Part B, you can use your Medicare-covered Annual Wellness visit to create a preventive care plan.

The Annual Wellness visit, also known as the yearly wellness visit, is a yearly visit with your doctor that discusses your plan of preventive care for the coming year. The visit will include creating or updating a preventive care plan based on your health care needs. During your Annual Wellness visit, you should complete a Health Risk Assessment questionnaire that will help you develop a preventive care plan. Note that you cannot receive the Annual Wellness visit within the first year that you've enrolled into Medicare or within the same year of getting the Welcome to Medicare visit. Medicare covers the Annual Wellness visit every 12 months.

Medicare covers both the Welcome to Medicare visit and Annual Wellness visit at no charge. However, keep in mind that a cost may apply if you receive additional tests or services to address a new or existing health problem. For example, let's say you see your doctor for a Medicare-covered Annual Wellness visit and your doctor finds that you have a dangerous blood pressure reading. You've also let the doctor know that you've been feeling dizzy. Given the reading and your symptoms, your doctor may want to order further tests and provide you with immediate treatment. In this case, costs for the additional tests and treatment would apply.

Keep in mind that both the Welcome to Medicare visit and Annual Wellness visit are not routine head-to-toe physical exams. Instead, these visits are designed to create or update a preventive care plan for you to keep you healthy.

In the month of May we celebrated Older Americans' Month to recognize older Americans for their contributions. This year, we focused on injury prevention and staying healthy and active, with the national theme "Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow".

On Senior Citizens Day, May 6, 2014, we honored two nominees, **Rita Alonzo of Saratoga Springs** and **Helen Glen of South Glens Falls**.

Rita volunteers five days per week at the Saratoga Springs Senior Center. She is an osteo leader and teaches two classes each week. She enjoys helping wherever needed in the senior center. Rita also started a program in her building to ensure that every resident there has "File to Life" information visible in case of an emergency. Rita's greatest reward is that "by doing this I do not feel old".

Helen has been volunteering as an EMT for the Moreau Emergency Squad for over twenty years. She is greatly appreciated for the empathy, kindness and calming spirit she shares with those in trauma. Helen also assists with the "Backpack Program" which provides food for the weekend for children at local elementary schools to take home. Helen's greatest reward is that she is helping others.

Our gratitude goes out to both of these women for making our communities better for citizens of all ages!

From our Dietitian:

### **Healthy Restaurant Eating**

With the warm weather upon us it is nice to get out and enjoy having a meal in a restaurant from time to time. Although finding fit fare at a restaurant can sometimes be challenging, a recent trend survey found that the restaurant industry is responding to consumer interest for more healthful options. Because restaurant meals are often much higher in calories, fat and sodium than meals we may make at home, we need to be "mindful" of our eating and food selections. Dining out in restaurants too often (especially fast food) has been linked to higher levels of body fat and markers for chronic disease. Consider the following healthy tips when eating out:

- \* Look for items available on the "lighter fare" options for fewer calories and fat.
- \* If available use menu labeling when making your selections to also control calories, fat and sodium.
- \* Use options to adjust your portion size such as: asking for a take home box before you start eating to remove half the food from your plate. This will reduce temptation to eat all the food provided. Another option is to consider sharing an entrée or having a salad or appetizer as a main course.
- \* Order as many add-ons as you can on the side. Salad dressings, gravies, and sauces are usually high in fat and calories. If you control your own portion, you may find you are satisfied with less than what is typically served.
- \* Avoid "unloved" calories. If your meal for example comes with a side that you feel neutral about, ask for a healthy substitute that you do like so you don't mindlessly eat extra calories just because they are on your plate.
- \* Be mindful of beverages. Sugary drinks and alcohol are usually just added on calories.
- \* Look for lower calorie cooking techniques such as baked, broiled or grilled over fried preparations.
- \* Look for easy substitutions. If you want steak, choose the leaner sirloin versus the porterhouse. Choose black beans over refried beans.
- \* Practice mindful eating. Remember to eat slowly and enjoy the experience of dining out, as you will be likely to feel more satisfied even with less food.

Saratoga County Office for the Aging  
152 West High Street  
Ballston Spa, N. Y. 12020

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## **Preventing Falls in the Home**

*“Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix”*

### **Safety Check for Stairs and Steps**

- ◆ Are there papers, shoes, books or other objects on the stairs?  
Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.
- ◆ Are some steps broken or uneven?  
Fix loose or uneven steps
- ◆ Are you missing a light over the stairway?  
Have an electrician put in an over-head light at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- ◆ Do you have only one light switch for your stairs?  
Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.
- ◆ Has the stairway light bulb burned out?  
Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.
- ◆ Is the carpet on the steps torn or loose?  
Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber tread to the stairs.
- ◆ Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a hand rail on only one side of the stairs?  
Fix loose handrails or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.

A message from Saratoga County Public Health

Saratoga County Public Health and the Office for the Aging Health Screening. There are no screenings scheduled for **July 2014**.

**Medicare Monthly Tip:** Choose to get future “Medicare & You” handbooks electronically. Save tax dollars and help the environment by signing up. Visit [www.MyMedicare.gov](http://www.MyMedicare.gov) to request this option and learn more. **Reprinted from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services**